1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11
Muskogee

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

THE HOUSEHOLD

Geographical, economic, consanguineal, and religious factors all entered into the evolution of the Creek confederacy. They took concrete shape in the household, family, clan, phratry, clan moiety, town, and town moiety. 592

Women owned the houses and were permanent occupants, moving only as new houses were built for them or as the entire group to which they belonged migrated seasonally or permanently. These houses were also the homes (hûti) of the nearest male blood relations, those whom the women called "uncles," "brothers," and "sons." They, however, normally went to the homes of their wives as soon as they were married, besides spending much time in the public square and in the tcokofa. On the other hand, aged men, whose wives had died and whose children were grown up and scattered, might come back to the homes of their childhood, or, as frequently happened, they might spend their last years moving from house to house among the women of their own clan connection—never, however, among those of the clan connection of their wives. [562] [591] [888]

A typical Creek home would therefore consist of a man and woman, their children, one or more sons-in-law, some grandchildren, some aged or dependent individuals of the same clan group, and perhaps an orphan or two or one or more individuals taken in war. These last, though somewhat looked down upon at first, were rapidly assimilated with the tribe which had captured them and soon came to be appreciated in accordance with their proven merit. There was nothing that may properly be called a slave system among the Indians of the Southeast. Where polygamy existed the wives were generally own sisters and usually inhabited the same house, though there were cases in which a man had wives living in two or more distinct houses. [597] [567] [595]

THE FAMILY

GENERAL REMARKS

A fairly accurate clue to the Muskogee conception of the "family" is furnished by the terms of relationship. These consist of a number of root words, not now analyzable, and words formed from these which it is natural to assume are secondary in importance. Many terms are of the "classificatory" type, covering a number of individuals who to our way of thinking bear quite distinct relations to the speaker. Theorists have tried to maintain that this collective use preceded the special or individual use, but so far as the Muskogee are concerned the evidence points to the special application as having been, if not the original, at least the typical or primary. Secondary or derivative 601

1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

to a clan into which he could not marry in his own town, provided that marriage between the clans was allowed in the town to which she belonged. As indicated already, there is no clear evidence that the great dual divisions were ever exogamous as a whole.

Before intertribal wars came to an end the Creeks were in the habit of increasing the size of their clans by adopting captives, especially young people of both sexes.

Slavery was not institutional among the southern Indians as it was with those of the north Pacific coast. The older male captives taken in war, and sometimes the younger ones, were anciently burned. The women and children, unless killed on the spot, were adopted into the tribe and so were those males whose lives had been spared. At the same time there was certainly some onus attaching to their position which may have lasted through life, though it does not appear to have attached to the second generation. Bartram had a good opportunity to observe the condition of slaves among the Seminole and represents their attitude as most abject and servile, but he adds that their children were "free and considered in every respect equal to themselves."[54] He states in this place that "the parents continue in a state of slavery as long as they live,"[54] but elsewhere he partially contradicts himself to the effect that "all slaves have their freedom when they marry, which is permitted and encouraged, when they and their offspring are every way upon an equality with their conquerors,"[55] and just above we read, "I saw in every town in the Nation [of the Creeks] and Seminoles that I visited, more or less male captives, some extremely aged, who were free and in as good circumstances as their masters."[56]

It must be remembered that at the time of which Bartram speaks the Creeks and Seminole had given up the custom of burning their captives, and therefore many were kept alive among them who had formerly been destroyed. The persistence of this less assimilable body of foreigners and the example of slavery among the whites had probably begun to affect the older institution to some extent. At an earlier date the captives taken in war probably formed a less distinct class and were assimilated more rapidly.

Some of the small clans were regarded as inferiors by the others, and this may have been due in some cases to a slave origin, but I have not recorded so much as a tradition to that effect, and the low esteem in which they were held more likely arose in most cases from the incestuous origin often attributed to them.[56] At various times white people have claimed kinship with certain Creek clans. For obvious reasons they have usually been assigned to a White clan, particularly the Wind.

[54] Bartram, Travels, p. 184.
[55] Ibid., p. 211.
[56] For ranking of clans see pp. 62, 212, 214, 222, and Bull. 73, p. 370.